



# “WRAIR Forward”

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## COMMANDER'S CORNER



I am on PCS orders to a faculty position at West Point. MAJ Paul Bliese will assume Command of USAMRU-E 22 July. He is a soldier and scientist of the highest caliber and will continue the service to the warfighter that is the proud tradition of this forward based unit of the Walter Reed Army Institute of Research (WRAIR-Forward). In

nearly two years as Commander of USAMRU-E, I have seen the Unit achieve its first ever Army approved science and technology objective: “Interventions to Enhance Warfighter Psychological Resilience and Prevent Psychiatric Casualties”, which will bring the Unit an average of \$2.5M over the next six years in research dollars. I have seen the Unit achieve its first ever bilateral agreement with the German Government to leverage assets toward achieving a metric of psychological demand for insertion into Objective Force Warrior. I have seen the Unit deliver a validated Suicide Attempt and Completion Surveillance Form to ERMC that was adopted by the U.S. Army for tracking suicide attempts and completions. I have seen the Unit deliver a personal digital assistant (PDA) based neuropsychological test for use in the Health Affairs assessment of OIF deployed warfighters. I have seen the Unit deliver to the 30th MED BDE for use in OIF, a PDA based DNBI data collection system with iridium phone data transmission protocols developed from the surveillance system of the Surgeons General of NATO and PfP nations. I have seen the Unit aggressively move toward delivering a post-deployment psychological screening decision support tool to advanced development, achieved with significant contributions from U.S. Air Force scientists and mental health professionals from the 254<sup>th</sup> Combat Stress Control Unit and the 1<sup>st</sup> Infantry Division. I have seen the Unit contribute to the development of Starlight Technology. The system was adapted to represent evacuation data from TRAC2ES in support of a collaborative effort with LRMC to discern the patient complex evacuated from OEF. Starlight was awarded an R&D 100 Award as one of the top 100 significant research projects for 2003. Delineating some of the major achievements during my tenure with WRAIR-Forward confirms the fact that this Unit is a rich asset to U.S. Army Europe and units force projected to EUCOM and CENTCOM areas of operation.

-MAJ James W. Ness

## Psychological Screening Plans for Operation Iraqi Freedom

Southern European Task Force (SETAF) leadership contacted USAMRU-E in April about providing support for redeployment psychological screening for 173<sup>rd</sup> Airborne Brigade units currently deployed to Iraq. The plan is for members of USAMRU-E to form part of the SETAF Reintegration Team in order to assess the need for mental health follow-up care.

USAMRU-E Psychological Screening instruments were adapted for this mission and a standardized secondary screen triage interview (see photo) was developed. The study design means a revision in the typical screening procedure (protocol addendum approved 9 May 03). In this study, both soldiers scoring above criteria on the primary screen and an additional 10% of those scoring below will be selected for the triage interview. This shift in procedure addresses the need to assess false negative rates and reduce the potential stigma associated with being interviewed.



This study will be part of the program of systematic research assessing the predictive validity of the screening instruments and will further the comprehensive development of a psychological screening program for U.S. Forces. Preparations have included participation in an operations planning meeting in Vicenza (CPT Thomas, 20 May 03) and training in the new procedures for the clinical research team, including personnel from USAMRU-E and the 254<sup>th</sup> Combat Stress Control team (29 MAY 03). A protocol modification expanding psychological screening to USAREUR/7<sup>th</sup> Army units deployed to Operation Iraqi Freedom (OIF) was approved 7 Apr 03. (WRAIR Protocol #889)

## NATO Research Group on Metrics

MAJ Ness attended the 1st meeting of NATO research group HFM0-081 RTG-020, *Stress and Psychological Support in Modern Military Operations*, in Paris (28-30 April 03). The 25 member-team included representatives from 17 NATO/PfP countries. The goal of the research group is to provide military leaders with information and practical guidelines on stress and psychological support to enhance effectiveness in modern military operations based on international collaboration.

## CMTC Study: Setting the Foundations

- Dr. Bernd Johannes, Mr. Frank Fischer, and Mr. Klaus Wittman visited the unit to deliver the prototype physiological monitoring system integrated into a MOLLE II field vest for assessment of physiological and psychological demand on a soldier under operational conditions. (Heidelberg, 7 May 03)
- MAJ Bliese and CPT Thomas made a site visit to the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC) Headquarters. MAJ Bliese and CPT Thomas briefed LTC Hebert, S3 for the CMTC, about the proposed CMTC study to be conducted by USAMRU-E next year. (Hohenfels, 9 May 03)
- The CMTC study was briefed by MAJ Bliese at the STP C: Warfighter Physiological Status Monitoring (WPSM) meeting (Cincinnati, 3-6 June 03).
- MAJ Ness met with Dr. Gary Allen, Science Representative for Army Material Command, and German government officials to formally establish a government-to-government agreement in order to cooperatively develop medical technologies related to military operational medicine. (Koblenz, 23 June 03)

## USAMRU-E Dialogue and Coordination

- Both SGT Carr, unit NCOIC, and SPC Sinclair, went TDY to WRAIR for training and a series of meetings with personnel, budget, and NCO leadership. (SGT Carr: 11-22 APR 03; SPC Sinclair: 13 JUN-1 JUL 03)
- MAJ Paul Bliese, Chief of Statistics and Modeling, Division of Neuropsychiatry, WRAIR, visited the unit from 05-09 MAY 03
- SFC Eisenmann, EOA at MPMC, visited the unit 9-12 JUN 03.

## Publications/Presentations

- Ehrhart, M.G., Thomas, J.L., & Bliese, P.D. (2003). *The incremental impact of unit-level OCB on unit effectiveness*. Paper presented at the 18th Annual Society of Industrial and Organizational Psychology Conference. Orlando, FL.
- Wright, K.M., Ness, J.W., Adler, A.A., Thomas, J.T., Castro, C.A., Smith, H., Mastroianni, G.R., & Johnson, R.C. (2003, April). *Validation of psychological screening procedures for deploying U.S. Forces*. Paper proceedings for the NATO Human Factors and Medicine Panel Symposium, Antalya, Turkey.

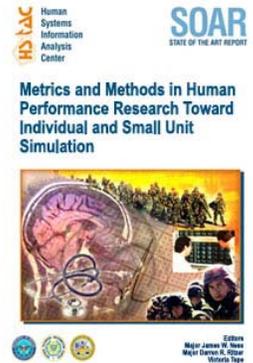
## West Point Cadets at USAMRU-E



USAMRU-E sponsored two West Point cadets as interns under the US Military Academy's Academic Individual Advancement Development program. CDTs Sara Sanders (16 June-3 July) and Victor Johnson (24 June-10 July), both psychology majors, worked on research reflecting different facets of the applied scientific process such as manuscript preparation, literature review, data processing, survey design, and statistical analysis. Both cadets were presented with Certificates of Achievement for their work at the unit. (pictured left to right: MAJ Ness, CDT Johnson, CDT Sanders, CPT Thomas after a run to the Königstuhl).

## State-of-the-Art on Performance

- Final drafts of the chapters for the State of the Art Report (SOAR), “*Metrics and Methods in Human Performance Modeling*,” have been approved.
- Lawrence Erlbaum has accepted the prospectus for publication.
- In SEP 03, the authors will meet for the final edits and chapter layouts.



## Proposal to Replicate Debriefing Study with Combat Troops

- Plans are underway to replicate the debriefing study in Iraq to assess the impact of debriefing on soldiers returning from a combat deployment. This effort is led by WRAIR-NP. An addendum for protocol #862 was approved 9 May 2003.
- A second protocol is under review (#1057) that would incorporate a self-disclosure through writing intervention into the debriefing study design on a pilot basis. In support of this project, Dr. James Pennebaker, University of Texas at Austin, visited the unit to discuss research in this area.
- A CRADA-IT was approved with the University of Mannheim to support Diplom-student Jessica Ippolito's analysis of the debriefing study (1 May 03). Ms. Ippolito also successfully defended her thesis proposal on coping on deployment at the University (17 June 2003).
- A Memorandum of Agreement was approved with the Department of Veterans Affairs Medical Center to support analysis of the debriefing study data (27 May 2003).

## Personnel Updates

- USAMRU-E was featured in a Stars and Stripes article “*10 out of job in contract dispute with Army*” published 1 April 2003. The article reported on the impact of a contractor-subcontractor dispute on USAMRU-E contractors and the unit's mission.
- PTG/CACI, a USA contractor, was awarded a contract to provide RA services. Under this contract agreement, Ms. Angela Salvi, Ms. Rachel Prayner, and Ms. Erica Schroeder, re-joined the unit as research associates. (MAY 03).
- Ms. Helene Millescamps brought her 8-year association with the unit to a close on 16 May 03. Ms. Millescamps began her history of dedicated service with the unit in 1995, first as a volunteer and then as a contractor, providing all of the unit's French translations and supporting two international conferences sponsored by the unit.
- Ms. Jessica Ippolito, was awarded a contract to work on the debriefing data set (3 June 2003).

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